

Healthy Bites



Information To Improve the Selection and Use Of Foods In Your Home

Using Candy to Reward Children is Not Such a Sweet Idea

Volume XXX

What will it be today? A candy kiss or a gum ball? A mini peanut butter cup or a licorice stick? Adults who regularly work with children are often looking for ways to reward them for good behavior and far too often, candy is the reward of choice. So what's so bad about handing out a mini-chocolate bar or a few jaw breakers when a child does something "right"? A lot. Read on for more information about why you shouldn't use candy as a reward, and what you can use instead!

More children are overweight than ever before. Children today have a greater chance of facing a major health problem such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. Today, more than ever, it's important to encourage and model for children how to choose, eat and enjoy healthy foods. *Did you know that children's food preferences for sweets increase when sweets are presented as rewards or when they are given along with positive adult interaction*? It's true, and that's what's wrong with giving out a piece of candy every time a child at home takes a nap or picks up his or her toys; or every time a student at school gets an A on a spelling test, finishes a chapter book or sits quietly when the teacher is talking.

In addition to candy being bad for your teeth and not being very nutritious, children and adults should learn to eat all foods including candy in response to being hungry, not in response to food given out as a reward. When parents and educators give food to children as a reward they are teaching them to eat in response to a situation, not in response to being physically hungry, which can lead to overeating, eating when they are not hungry, or eating to reward themselves. *What can you give students and children instead of candy for a reward?* Following are a few suggestions:

At Home

Take a Book Break. Curl up with your child in a comfortable chair and read him a new book or one that is an old favorite.

Cook's Helper. Allow your child, whatever the age, to help prepare dinner (no matter how messy it gets!). Learning to cook and prepare food is a great way to spend quality time, away from the TV with your child.

Outdoor Game Time. Let your child choose a favorite outdoor game to play with you. Spend 30 minutes outside, playing the game. Your child and your body will love you for it!



At School



Teacher Time. Students earn points toward a special lunch or walk with the teachers.

Talk Time. If all students follow the class rules for a specified time, they earn a designated number of talk time minutes to be redeemed on Friday of each week. Students can also work toward earning *game time, free choice time or an extra recess.*

Source: Michigan Team Nutrition

****WORD WISE****

Children's food preferences for sweets

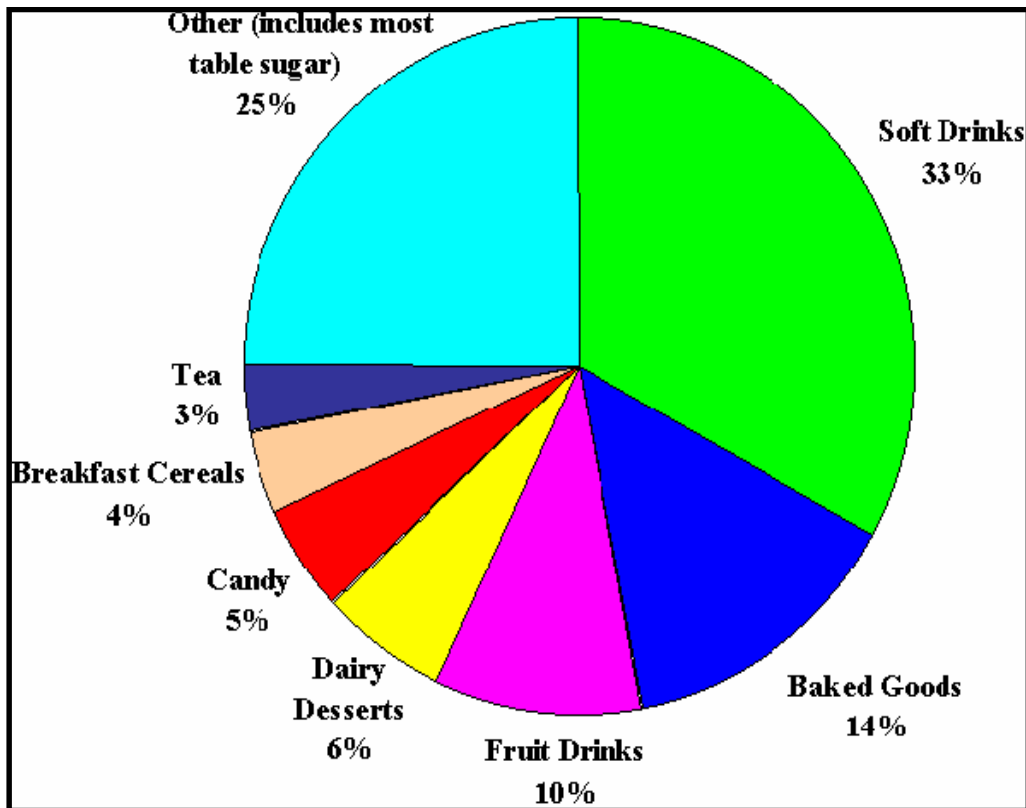
Children's preference for sweets increase when sweets are presented as rewards. It's true, children and adults should learn to eat **all** foods—including candy in response to being hungry, not in response to food given out as a reward.

Source: Michigan Team Nutrition

ALTERNATIVE TO USING FOOD AS A REWARD

If you're looking for more ideas on what to give children instead of candy as a reward, Michigan Team Nutrition has a fact sheet called Alternatives to Using Food As A Reward, that lists at least 50 low-cost or zero-cost ideas you may want to implement at home. For a free copy of this fact sheet please contact the MSU Extension Food and Nutrition program in Macomb County 586-469-6432.

Where Added Sugar Comes From



The graph above shows where sugar is found in the foods and drinks we eat. An 8 ounce soft drink typically contains 80-100 calories and 22- 33 grams of sugar. If you divide the number of sugar grams by 4, this will provide you with the number of teaspoons of sugar in an 8 ounce serving, typically 5 to 7 teaspoons of sugar per 8 ounce serving. Sugar is found naturally in many foods, like milk and dairy foods and fruits. These foods contain important nutrients for health.

Source: CSPI

CHECK THE LABEL

The amount of sugar in a single serving of this food is listed on the label.

Check the amount to limit sugar intake. This product contains 22 grams of sugar which is equal to 5 teaspoons.

Too much sugar in the diet can lead to obesity or chronic disease like diabetes or heart disease.

Source: USDA

Serving Size: 8 fl oz • 240 mL		
Amount Per Serving		
Calories 120	Calories from Fat 0	
		% DV
Total Fat 0g		0%
Saturated Fat 0g		0%
Trans Fat 0g		
Polyunsaturated Fat 0g		
Monounsaturated Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 0mg		0%
Sodium 0mg		0%
Total Carbohydrate 27g		9%
Dietary Fiber 0g		0%
Sugars 22g		
Protein 1g		2%
Vitamin A 0%	•	Vitamin C 100%
Calcium 2%	•	Iron 0%

** ZIPPY ZITI WITH MIXED VEGETABLES **

Ingredients

- ♥ 8 oz. Ziti, Mostaccioli or other medium pasta shape, uncooked
- ♥ 2 scallions, finely chopped
- ♥ 1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning
- ♥ 2 tbsp. Horseradish sauce
- ♥ 1/2 cup skim milk
- ♥ 4 oz. (1 cup) grated Cheddar cheese
- ♥ 1 1/2 cups cooked mixed vegetables
- ♥ Salt & freshly ground black pepper to taste.



Prepare pasta according to package directions. Meanwhile, heat oil in medium saucepan. Add scallions and saute over medium heat until limp. Do not brown. Remove from heat. Stir in Italian seasoning, horseradish sauce, milk and cheese. Cook over medium heat until thickened. Stir in cooked vegetables and heat. Place pasta in a large heated bowl and toss with sauce. Each serving provides: 232 calories, 30 g carbohydrates, 7.4 g fat, 76 mg cholesterol.

Source: www.ilovepasta.org/recipes/

After School Snacks and Food Safety USDA Quiz for Parents and Kids

Bookbags and backpacks get quickly tossed aside and the munchies take over when kids burst through the door after school. If your child is home alone for an hour or two after school, how can you make sure their snacks are safe from foodborne bacteria and they are protected from dangers in the kitchen?



These days, many kids don't just open a bag of chips - some make cookies from scratch; others use a microwave to heat up instant noodles or soup. Sound safe? Not if the cookie maker tastes the raw homemade cookie dough because that could lead to Salmonella poisoning and sometimes hospitalization. And heating soup in the microwave isn't safe if the cook isn't tall enough to reach the microwave and spills hot soup on himself. That's a major cause of serious burns in children.

Before you let kids have the run of the kitchen, USDA advises you to take a little quiz together:

Quiz: True or False -

1. Put backpacks on the floor, not the counter.
2. Washing your hands with warm water and soap washes bacteria down the drain.
3. You need to wash fruits and vegetables under cold running water before eating.
4. Cooked foods should not be put on the same plate that held raw meat or poultry (unless the plate has been thoroughly washed.)
5. Lunch meat or deli meat does not need to be refrigerated until the package is opened.
6. Don't leave leftovers on the counter for more than 2 hours.
7. Always wash your hands after touching raw meat or poultry.
8. Eating homemade cookie dough is not safe because it may contain raw eggs.

(Answers: 1, 2, 3, 4, True. 5 - False. 6, 7, 8 - True.)

Take some time for a "Food Safety Workshop" with your children. Walk them around the kitchen -- explain how to safely use the microwave and teach them some basic food safety tips. Don't let children who don't know how to read use the microwave oven. Reading and understanding directions is **extremely** important. If they're old enough to use a microwave, follow these tips:

Cover a dish of food for microwaving with a lid or plastic wrap. Wrap loose to let steam escape.

Throw away leftovers (and any perishable food) that stays out longer than two hours—or one hour if it's over 90° F. When in doubt, throw it out!

Foods and liquids are heated unevenly in the microwave, so stir or rotate food midway through cooking. If you don't you'll have cold spots where harmful bacteria can survive.

Reheat hot dogs until they are hot and steaming. Pierce hot dogs with a fork before putting them into the microwave.

To prevent burns, carefully remove food from the microwave oven. Use pot holders and uncover foods away from you face so steam can escape.

Source: www.fsis.usda.gov

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- Calendar of upcoming programs
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For more information or questions regarding food and nutrition, contact us!

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